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SOURCE Svenska Dagbladet, No 141, 1950.

REPORTS FOOD SHORTAGE IN HUNGARY

Vienna, 27 May -- Five refugees, arriving in Vienna in spite of the Iron Curtain, report that all milk products have disappeared completely from Budapest. Veal, beef, and pork, which a few months ago filled the store windows, are now as rare as eggs.

Hungary, a purely agrarian state, has had a severe shortage of food since the spring of 1950. Szabad Nep, the central organ of the government and of the Communist Party, has given four reasons for this: (1) the seasonal shortage of fodder, (2) food exports, (3) inadequate organization, and (4) criminal propaganda causing hoarding.

However, actually the common man cannot hoard milk and butter. A worker's weekly wage amounts to about 100-125 forints, and a kilogram of butter costs 24 forints. One can, therefore, purchase 4 kilograms of butter with a week's wages.

The obvious reason for the shortage is that the government is paying for the Five-Year Plan's machinery with food. The Soviets demand the expansion of Hungarian heavy industry. Last month alone, Hungary had to deliver 500 tons of butter to Switzerland and Belgium for the machine tools imported by the government. Exactly 90 percent of the 10-million-dollar trade agreement concluded with Austria is to be paid by Hungary in food. In turn, Hungary is importing 10 million dollars' worth of machinery from Austria for the Manfred Weiss factories, which employ 18,500 workers. These factories are being converted to the production of Soviet-type weapons.

In consequence of its conversion to war production, Hungarian industry has less to deliver abroad, and the agreements concluded with various countries provide for fewer and fewer industrial products and more and more food for export. Rationing in the towns is now considerably more stringent than in the past, even in the case of potatoes. Both in Budapest and in the country towns, the food commissioners have ordered that a purchaser may procure only 5 kilograms of potatoes. In Budapest last week, the market stands ran out of

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potatoes, while there was still a long queue of people who had been waiting since morning. The Hungarian government is also responsible for the feeding of the 120,000 Soviet soldiers stationed in Hungary. The major portion of the canning factories' production goes to the Army.

Dictator Rakosi's promise last fall, that the price of food would come down, has not been kept.

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